

P E M M I C A N

MADE AT FORT MCPHERSON, A HUDSON'S
BAY COMPANY'S POST SIXTY-FIVE MILES
WITHIN THE ARCTIC CIRCLE AND TWO
THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-
EIGHT MILES NORTHWEST OF WINNIPEG

A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM THE MANITOBA FREE PRESS



WINNIPEG, CANADA, CHRISTMAS
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWO

1902

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"Then on pemmican they feasted."

—LONGFELLOW, *Hiawatha*.

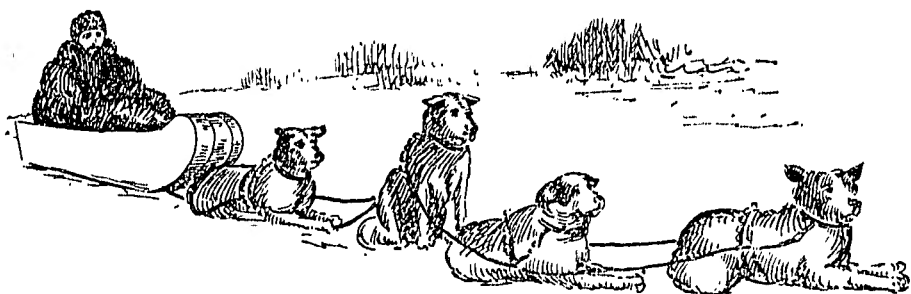
"A wooden bowl was soon set before me filled with the nutritious preparation of dried meat called pemmican by the northern voyagers and wasna by the Dahcotah."

—PARKMAN, *The Oregon Trail*, Chap. xv. (1846).

"As the trip extended over six or eight weeks, it was necessary to be well provided with food. The fare was simple but substantial. Flour, strong black tea and sugar were the staples, and the well-known pemmican. Pemmican is now a thing of the past, but was the sheet anchor of the Red River voyageur. Obtained by the buffalo hunters on their buffalo hunts, the flesh of the buffalo was cut up into slices, dried and beaten or flailed into powder; it was then packed in bags of raw hide, into which hot boiling fat and marrow of the buffalo carcass was poured. Thus it became air proof, and without salt or any preservative, the bag closely sewed up, could be thus kept for years. A finer sort of this article, called 'berry pemmican,' was made by mixing the flesh with the berries of the abundant saskatoon, or service berry (*Amelanchier Canadensis*). This was considered a delicacy. While some, like the late Bishop McLean, did not appreciate pemmican, he having declared before an audience of notables in London that eating pemmican was to him like chewing a tallow candle, yet this important staple, worth thousands of pounds a year to the prairie travellers, was so important that the Hudson's Bay Company could not have carried on its wide and extensive enterprises without it."

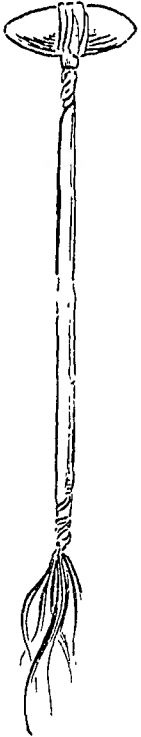
—FONSECA, *On the St. Paul Trail in the Sixties*.

FROM THE PRESSES OF THE
MANITOBA FREE PRESS JOB DEPARTMENT
WINNIPEG, CANADA



CONCERNING PEMMICAN

IN the days, not yet two score years ago, when supplies were brought in from Hudson's Bay to the little Red River settlement where the city of Winnipeg now stands, the stock of pemmican was the first indispensable provided for the long journey of the hardy voyageurs; who by way of river, portage and lake traversed the distance from York Factory, where the Hudson's Bay



Company's ships ended their annual voyages from England. And when the trains of Red River carts started out on the trail to St. Paul laden with furs, to come back carrying supplies, pemmican was in like manner the first indispensable to be provided for the journey. In those days the buffalo in his countless herds was still in the land. He is vanished now, and his vast grazing grounds are being turned to the service of man. The days of the voyageurs and of the Red River cart are vanished with him into the irrevocable past. They belong to a historic yesterday, which is already a remote epoch. The Red River region that knew them has become a land of history and of romance.

The last herd of buffalo east of the Red River was seen by Sir John

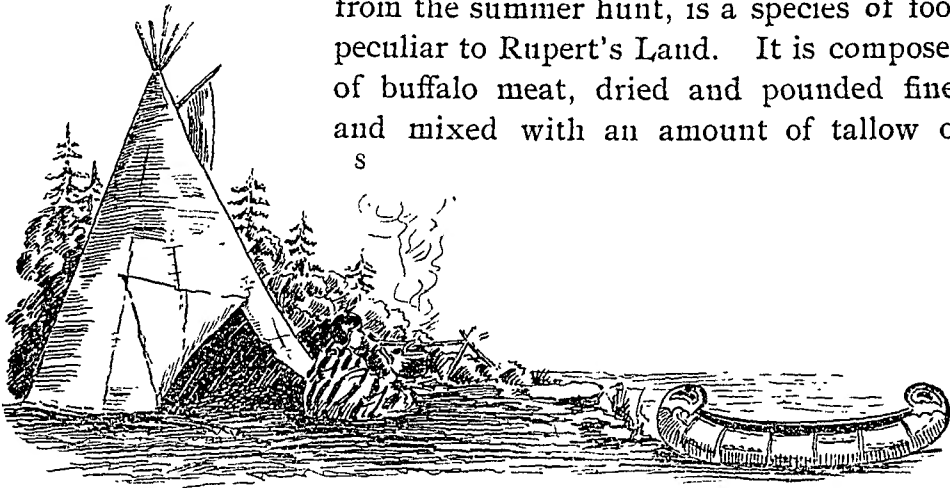
Schultz in 1860, then a young man of nineteen on his first journey to this Western country, in whose history he was destined to play such a conspicuous part. Hargrave, the Red River historian, writing in 1869, says: "The serious decrease in the number of buffalo which has been perceptible of late years is producing a very disastrous effect on the provision trade of the country. Pemmi-can, which formerly cost three-pence a pound, can now be procured with difficulty for a shilling, and dried meat which formerly cost two-pence now costs eight-pence. This is a circumstance which threatens the transport business of the Company with most alarming complications."

In an earlier chapter of his book, Hargrave writes of the buffalo hunts as follows:



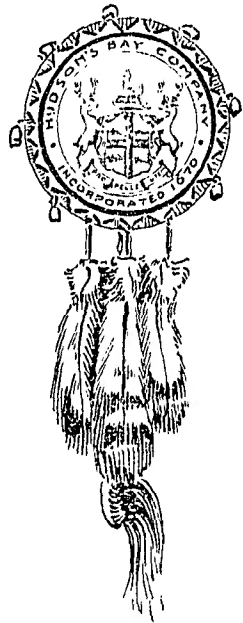
“Conspicuous in importance amongst the annual events in the Red River colony are the journeys made to the Plains by the Buffalo hunters at different periods of the year. The parties belonging to the summer hunt start about the beginning of June, and remain on the Plains until the beginning of August. They then return for a short time to the settlement for the purpose of trading their pemmican and dried meat. The autumn hunters start during the month of August, and remain on the prairie until the end of October, or early in November, when they usually return bringing the fresh or ‘green meat,’ preserved at that late season by the extreme cold. Those hunters, of whom there are many who remain on the Plains during the whole winter, employ themselves in trapping the fur-bearing animals, and hunting the buffalo for their robes. The pemmican, which forms the staple article of produce from the summer hunt, is a species of food peculiar to Rupert’s Land. It is composed of buffalo meat, dried and pounded fine, and mixed with an amount of tallow or

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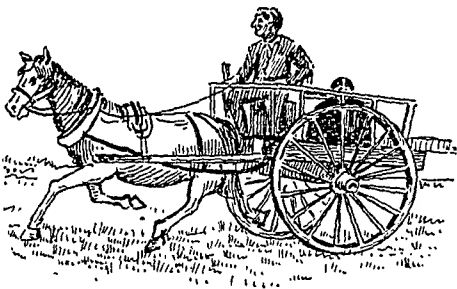
buffalo fat equal to itself in bulk. The tallow, having been boiled, is poured hot from the caldron into an oblong bag manufactured from the buffalo hide, into which the pounded meat has previously been placed. The contents are then stirred together until they have been thoroughly well mixed. When full, the bag is sewed up and laid in store. Each bag when full weighs one hundred pounds. It is calculated that, on an average the carcase of each buffalo will yield enough of pemmican to fill one bag. This species of food is invaluable as a travelling provision. There is no risk of spoiling it as, if ordinary care be taken to keep the bags dry and free from mould, there is no assignable limit to the time the pemmican will keep. It is the travelling provision used throughout the North, where, in addition to the already specified qualifications, its great facility of transportation renders it exceedingly useful."

With the disappearance of the buffalo, the making of pemmican was



transferred to the far northern posts of the Hudson's Bay Company, deer's meat being used in place of buffalo meat, and the total quantity made yearly amounting to little, in comparison with the great stores of pemmican made in the days of the buffalo hunts as described by Hargrave. Pemmican is still made every year at those Hudson's Bay Company's posts for use by trappers and voyageurs who penetrate beyond the Arctic Circle, and whom the outside world thinks of, when it thinks of them at all, as being neighbors of the Esquimaux. To the average person nowadays, pemmican is known only as a thing read of. It is a word bringing to mind something of the romance of the fur-trading days as pictured in Ballantyne's stories or in the pages of the

10



Red River Cart

writer of "The Lords of the North." One associates it, too, with the search for the pole. It is as remote from one's everyday life as the Esquimaux in his kyack amid the Arctic burgs and floes.

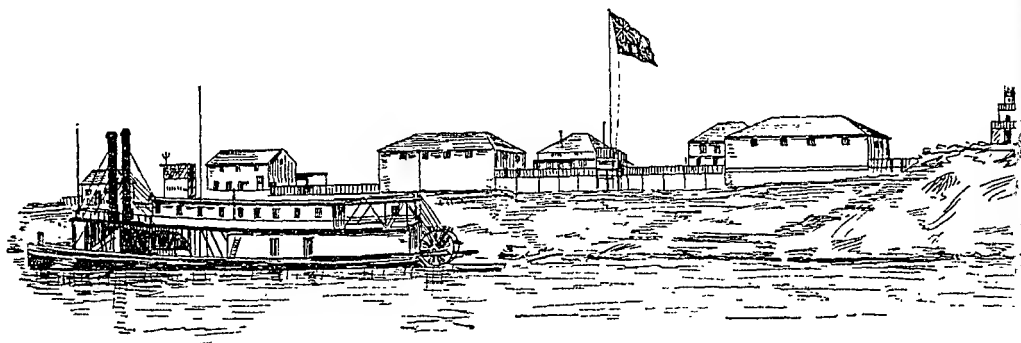
At the request of the Winnipeg Free Press, instructions were sent early this year to the Hudson's Bay Company's post on Peel River, known as Fort McPherson, within a hundred miles of the Arctic Ocean, to have a quantity of pemmican specially prepared and sent to Winnipeg for the purpose of being put up here in small sacks to be sent out as Christmas remembrances by the Free Press. This pemmican was prepared by an old trapper who has been for many years in the Hudson's Bay Company's service, and who in his time has made many hundreds of

II



pounds of buffalo pemmican. In making this supply for the Free Press he has used the meat of reindeer exclusively. Some of it he has made plain; some of it is berry pemmican. It has been prepared with the greatest care, and the Hudson's Bay Company guarantees it to be genuine reindeer pemmican of the very best quality. Fort McPherson, the Hudson's Bay Company's post where it was made, is on Peel River, a few miles from its junction with the Mackenzie River. To be exact, Fort McPherson is between parallels 67 and 68 of north latitude and a short distance east of the 135th meridian; it is sixty-five miles within the Arctic Circle, and eighty-five miles from the coast of the Arctic Ocean. The pemmican was brought from Fort

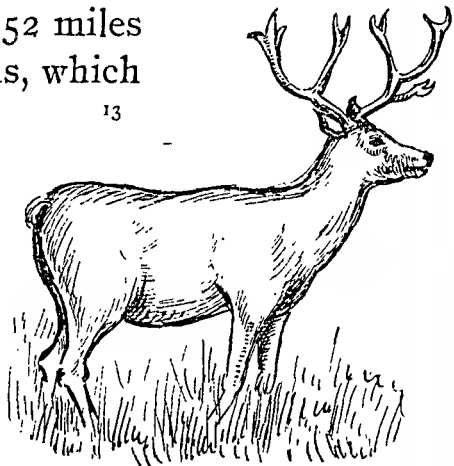
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Fort McPherson

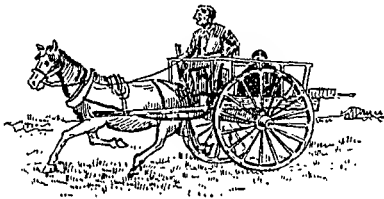
McPherson down the Peel River to the Mackenzie, and up the Mackenzie in the Hudson's Bay Company's steamer "Wrigley" to Great Slave Lake, across that Lake and up Slave River to Fort Smith, a distance from Fort McPherson of 1,299 miles. From Fort Smith it was taken by the Company's steamer "Grahame" up Slave River, across Athabasca Lake and up the Athabaska River to Fort McMurray, a distance of 303 miles. The "Wrigley," it may be of interest to note, is a keel boat 86 feet long, propelled by a screw ; she has a speed of about eight miles an hour on the Lake. The "Grahame" is a flat-bottomed riverboat with a stern wheel. From Fort McMurray flat-bottomed boats, or batteaux, usually in a brigade of twelve, carried it 252 miles—some ninety miles of rapids, which

13



Reindeer

necessitate many portages, being encountered on the way—to Athabaska Landing; from which point freight is packed by trail 90 miles to Edmonton. From Edmonton to Calgary by the Edmonton extension of the Canadian Pacific Railway is 194 miles; and from Calgary to Winnipeg on the main line is 840 miles. The total distance travelled from Fort McPherson to Winnipeg is thus 2,978 miles. In the winter the distance from Fort McPherson to Edmonton is covered by dog trains, a regular packet service being maintained along the entire line of the Hudson's Bay Company's posts or "forts" as they are still called. After leaving Fort McPherson, the dog train first comes to Fort Good Hope, then to Fort Norman, and next to Fort Simpson, which is the head



post for the Mackenzie River district. Leaving Fort Simpson, the following are the different posts in the order in which they are come to: Fort Providence, Fort Rae, Fort Hay River, Fort Resolution, Fort Smith, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McMurray, and thence, following a different route from that taken in summer, Fort Lac la Biche, Fort Victoria and up the Saskatchewan to Edmonton.

After being received in Winnipeg, the pemmican was divided up and packed in little sacks, one of which is presented herewith. This reindeer pemmican is procurable only in the far North. The pemmican carried by Arctic explorers who outfit their ships at their port of departure is, as described in "The Rescue of Greeley," by Schley and Soley (page 132) "made from the



round of beef cut in strips and dried, then shredded or mixed with beef tallow and currants." As will doubtless have occurred to the reader, pemmican of the far Canadian North and biltong of the Boers on the South African veldt are cousins. Both contain the largest amount of nourishment in the smallest space.

As for the palatableness of pemmican, whether eaten just as it is, or cooked, there is nothing can be said that will begin to make as lasting an impression upon the reader as an actual test of the contents of the accompanying little sack. The late Bishop of Saskatchewan, as we have seen, declared before a distinguished audience in London that eating pemmican was like chewing a tallow candle. The reader may be inclined to take this jocular remark of the



Bishop's seriously, especially after trying a mouthful of the real article. Be it remembered, however, that pemmican is a thing to which the Latin proverb about hunger being the best sauce has a pre-eminent application. Of many testimonies that might be cited, take this from Fonseca's "On the St. Paul Trail in the Sixties" :

" After some hours of steady travelling, as the sun stood high in the sky, the welcome stop took place. . . . The kettle was soon simmering. While this was occurring the Red River bannock was in course of preparation. It was simply flour, water and salt. The dough was kneaded on a bag spread out on a buffalo skin, the cakes were flattened and baked in a frying pan over the fire, and were soon ready. When the water had boiled in the kettle, the pemmican bag was broached, a quantity of it was stirred into the boiling water, flour and salt were added, and thus resulted the celebrated 'rubaboo,' as it was called.

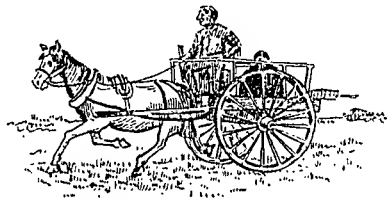


When the mixture was thickened it then was called 'rowschow,' but for the journey the former was preferable. Hot bannocks and piping hot 'rubaboo' were served around, the latter in cups, and the tea in tin cups soon began to disappear among the hungry company. The appetite, stimulated by fresh air and exercise, was surprising, and a dyspeptic being looking on at such a meal would turn green with envy."

Let us turn over a few pages of Fonseca's interesting narrative, and read again :

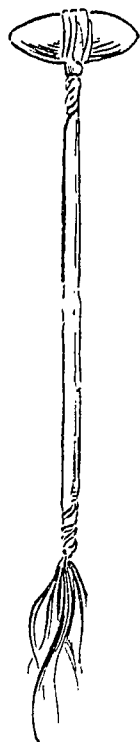
"The afternoon journey was usually continued for about twelve or fifteen miles, when the cheerful word, both to man and beast, was given to halt for the night. The cuisine was again put into operation, though the menu was somewhat changed. Instead of 'rubaboo,' 're-chaud' was served, commonly corrupted 'row-schow,' from the Latin 're' and the French 'chaud' heated over. Pemmican cooked in a frying

18

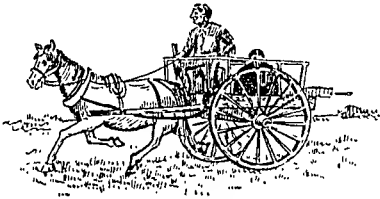


pan, a little grease, pepper, salt, with a trace of onions and potatoes added, constituted this a dish to set before a king. If the night was clear, and the moon flooded the prairie with her silver light, robes were spread. The sound of the fiddle invited the dance. The Red River jig was struck up, and one after another exercised himself to his heart's content, as the shouts of the audience stimulated him."

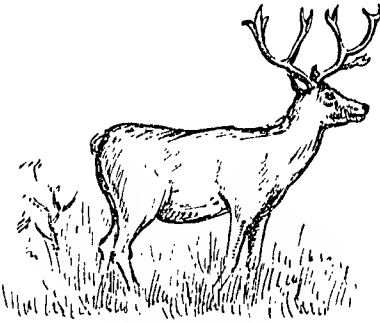
In the days dealt with by the chronicler whose pages we have just been turning over, the spot where the Free Press building stands, in which this is written, was on the open prairie. Near by ran the Red River trail, which is now Winnipeg's busy Main Street, with its massive buildings and its hurrying crowds. The Free Press—which is now in its thirty-first year, having begun publication, as a weekly, in 1872—rocked the cradle of the infant city. It is



to-day one of the oldest and best established newspapers in Canada. It enjoys the distinction of having a larger circulation than any other newspaper published on the continent in a city of equal population with Winnipeg, and of containing a greater number of classified advertisements than any newspaper published in any city twice the size of Winnipeg. It enjoys also the distinction of covering more territory in point of circulation than any other daily paper on the continent, and is found on the shores of Hudson's Bay and in the most remote places of the great Canadian West. Covering as it does a territory extending from Port Arthur on Lake Superior to Victoria on the Pacific Ocean, it is known as the Great Western Daily. The steady growth of the paper's



importance and influence has been part of the wonderful growth of Western Canada, whose resources it is untiring in advertising and whose development it has never ceased to promote.



The Canadian West

MANITOBA AND THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

POPULATION

1870.....	20,000 (ten per cent. whites)	
1881.....	87,775	1901.....413,887
1891.....	219,305	1902.....515,000

IMMIGRATION

1902—January 1st to October 31st64,636		
1902		1901
17,002	British.....	11,810
23,535	European.....	19,852
24,099	American.....	17,987
64,636		49,149

IMMIGRANTS' EFFECTS—VALUE

	<i>European</i>	<i>American</i>
1899.....	\$3,294,844.00	\$2,183,861.00
1900.....	3,722,654.00	2,385,724.00
1901.....	4,541,000.00	2,915,000.00
1902 (10 months).....	5,432,313.00	3,750,363.00

CROP

In 1902	125,000,000	Bushels of Grain	
	<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Oats</i>	<i>Barley</i>
Manitoba bushels	53,077,267	34,478,160	11,848,422
N.W. Territories "	14,649,500	10,725,500	844,000
Total (<i>bushels</i>)	67,726,767	45,203,660	12,792,432

AVERAGE YIELDS, 1902

	<i>Bushels per Acre</i>	
Wheat.....	26.0	Rye.....19.5
Oats.....	47.5	Peas.....21.4
Barley.....	35.9	Potatoes.....157.0
Flax.....	13.7	Roots.....265.0
Acreage prepared for crop of 1903... ..1,015,870 acres		

The Canadian West—*Continued*

DAIRY PRODUCE (MANITOBA), 1902

Butter	3 015,875 lbs	Value	\$636.163 00
Cheese.....	1,093,653 "	"	111,443.00
			<u>\$747,603.00</u>

LIVE STOCK EXPORTED, 1898-1902

Beef Cattle	40,025
Stockers to United States	34,025

NEW FARM BUILDINGS ERECTED (MANITOBA), 1902

Value	\$2,228,875.00
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MILLING CAPACITY OF MANITOBA

Barrels per Day	11,000
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HOMESTEAD ENTRIES

1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902
1,857	2,384	4,848	6,689	7,426	8,167	14,832

RAILWAYS (MANITOBA)

In 1880	Miles	200
In 1902	"	2,546



Manitoba

TEN YEARS' EXPANSION

Total value of the products of Manitoba for the years 1892 and 1902:

1892	<i>Bushels</i>	<i>At</i>	<i>Value</i>
Wheat	14,453,835	\$ 0.50	\$7,226,917
Oats	11,054,090	.22	2,503,899
Barley	2,831,076	.25	707,919
Potatoes	2,000,600	.25	500,150
Roots	6,999,200	.10	699,920
Flax	34,360	1.00	34,360
Peas	48,573	.50	24,286
Rye	24,720	.40	9,888
Total			<u>\$11,767,339</u>

1902	<i>Bushels</i>	<i>At</i>	<i>Value</i>
Wheat	53,077,267	\$ 0.57	\$30,254,042
Oats	34,478,160	.22	7,585,195
Barley	11,848,422	.25	2,962,105
Flax	564,440	1.00	564,440
Rye	49,900	.40	19,960
Peas	34,154	.50	17,077
Potatoes	3,459,325	.25	864,831
Roots	3,230,995	.10	323,099
	<i>Number</i>	<i>At</i>	<i>Value</i>
Turkeys	83,905	\$ 0.75	\$ 62,929
Geese	34,270	.40	13,708
Chickens	363,020	.25	90,755
Dairy Products.....			747,603
Cattle (Export)....	4,000	47.00	168,000
Stockers.	20,000	15.00	300,000
Hogs Sold	30,000	14.00	420,000
Total			<u>\$44,393,744</u>

AVERAGE WHEAT YIELDS (Bushels)

<i>State or Province</i>	<i>Ten Years 1892-1901</i>	1901	1902
Ontario	15.5	15.4	20.0
Minnesota	13.7	12.9	14.7
North Dakota ..	12.2	13.1	15.8
South Dakota	10.2	12.9	11.8
Kansas	13.0	18.5	10.6
Manitoba ..	17.7	25.1	26.0

Winnipeg

POPULATION—In 1870, 213; in 1902 51,000.

WHOLESALE TRADE—\$8,000,000 a year.

Property on Main Street, which in 1870 was a trail, has changed hands in 1902 at \$1,500 a foot.

HOSPITALS—In 1870, 6 beds; in 1902, 475 beds.

CHURCHES—In 1870, 3; in 1902, 68.

SCHOOLS—Value: In 1870, \$239; 1901, \$487,000. Attendance: 1871, 35; 1901, 9,800.

CIVIC EXPENDITURE—1871, \$449; 1902, \$145,000.

NEW BUILDINGS—1902, value \$2,375,950.

BANK CLEARINGS—1870, —; 1891, \$40,000,000; 1902, \$134,199,000.

Asphalted Streets—18 miles.

Goods entered at Custom House for fiscal year ending June 30, 1902 (Dominion Government Report), \$8,157,948.

Third city in Canada in point of Postal Revenue, as also in volume of Bank Clearings, being exceeded only by Montreal and Toronto.



MANITOBA FREE PRESS

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

CIRCULATION STATEMENT BULLETIN

Illustrating Growth in Circulation, 1901-1902,
Morning and Evening Editions

MONTH	SWORN DAILY AVERAGE		DAILY AVERAGE INCREASE
	1902	1901	
JANUARY . . .	13,907	12,742	1,165
FEBRUARY . . .	14,442	13,227	1,216
MARCH	14,465	13,175	1,290
APRIL	14,874	13,359	1,515
MAY	14,860	13,316	1,544
JUNE	15,219	13,391	1,828
JULY	15,712	13,941	1,771
AUGUST	16,173	13,883	2,290
SEPTEMBER . .	16,095	14,020	2,075
OCTOBER . . .	15,787	14,042	1,745
NOVEMBER . .	16,217	13,963	2,254

Four Free Press Facts

1. Its city circulation is the largest proportionately to population of any newspaper in America.
2. Its total circulation is larger than that of any newspaper published on the American Continent printed in a city corresponding in size to Winnipeg.
3. It carries more paid "want" or classified advertisements than any other paper in America, published in a city corresponding in size to Winnipeg, and, as far as can be ascertained, more advertisements of this nature than any other paper printed in a city with double the population of Winnipeg. An infallible proof of wide circulation and result producing power.
4. An advertisement published in the Free Press will have wider publicity than if printed in all the other daily papers combined, published from Port Arthur to the Rocky Mountains. Circulation figures backed by affidavit, and verification invited.

